NUMB. III.

The SPECTATOR.

Quoi quiſque ferè ſtudio devinctus adhæret :
Aut quibus in rebus multùm ſumus antè morati :
Atque in quâ ratione fuit contenta magis mens ;
In ſomnis eadem plerumque videmur obire. Lucr. L. 4.

Saturday, March 3. 1711.

IN one of my late Rambles, or rather Speculations, I looked into the great Hall where the Bank is kept, and was not a little pleaſed to ſee the Directors, Secretaries, and Clerks, with all the other Members of that wealthy Corporation, ranged in their ſeveral Stations, according to the Parts they act in that juſt and regular Oeconomy. This revived in my Memory the many Diſcourſes which I had both read and heard concerning the Decay of Publick Credit, with the Methods of reſtoring it, and which, in my Opinion, have always been defective, becauſe they have always been made with an Eye to ſeparate Intereſts, and Party Principles.

The Thoughts of the Day gave my Mind Employment for the whole Night, ſo that I fell inſenſibly into a kind of Methodical Dream, which diſpos'd all my Contemplations into a Viſion or Allegory, or what elſe the Reader ſhall pleaſe to call it.

Methoughts I returned to the Great Hall, where I had been the Morning before, but, to my Surprize, inſtead of the Company that I left there, I ſaw towards the Upper-end of the Hall, a beautiful Virgin, ſeated on a Throne of Gold. Her Name (as they told me) was *Publick Credit*. The Walls, inſtead of being adorned with Pictures and Maps, were hung with many Acts of Parliament written in Golden Letters. At the Upper-end of the Hall was the *Magna Charta*, with the Act of Uniformity on the right Hand, and the Act of Toleration on the left. At the Lower-end of the Hall was the Act of Settlement, which was placed full in the Eye of the Virgin that ſat upon the Throne. Both the Sides of the Hall were covered with ſuch Acts of Parliament as had been made for the Eſtabliſhment of publick Funds. The Lady ſeemed to ſet an unſpeakable Value upon theſe ſeveral Pieces of Furniture, inſomuch that ſhe often refreſhed her Eye with them, and often ſmiled with a Secret Pleaſure, as ſhe looked upon them ; but, at the ſame time, ſhowed a very particular Uneaſineſs, if ſhe ſaw any thing approaching that might hurt them. She appeared indeed infinitely timorous in all her Behaviour: And, whether it was from the Delicacy of her Conſtitution, or that ſhe was troubled with Vapours, as I was afterwards told by one who I found was none of her Well-wiſhers, ſhe changed Colour, and ſtartled at every thing ſhe heard. She was likewiſe (as I afterwards found) a greater Valetudinarian than any I had ever met with, even in her own Sex, and ſubject to ſuch Momentary Conſumptions, that in the twinkling of an Eye, ſhe would fall away from the moſt florid Complexion, and the moſt healthful State of Body, and wither into a Skeleton. Her Recoveries were often as ſudden as her Decays, inſomuch that ſhe would revive in a Moment out of a waſting Diſtemper, into a Habit of the higheſt Health and Vigour.

I had very ſoon an Opportunity of obſerving theſe quick Turns and Changes in her Conſtitution. There ſat at her Feet a Couple of Secretaries, who received every Hour Letters from all Parts of the World, which the one or the other of them was perpetually reading to her ; and, according to the News ſhe heard, to which ſhe was exceedingly attentive, ſhe changed Colour, and diſcovered many Symptoms of Health or Sickneſs.

Behind the Throne was a prodigious Heap of Bags of Mony, which were piled upon one another ſo high that they touched the Ceiling. The Floor, on her right Hand, and on her left, was covered with vaſt Sums of Gold that roſe up in Pyramids on either ſide of her: But this I did not ſo much wonder at, when I heard, upon Enquiry, that ſhe had the ſame Virtue in her Touch, which the Poets

Poets tell us a *Lydian* King was formerly poſſeſs'd of; and that ſhe could convert whatever ſhe pleas'd into that precious Metal.

After a little Dizzineſs, and confuſed Hurry of Thought, which a Man often meets with in a Dream, methoughts the Hall was alarm'd, the Doors flew open, and there entered half a dozen of the moſt hideous Phantoms that I had ever ſeen (even in a Dream) before that Time. They came in two by two, though match'd in the moſt diſſociable Manner, and mingled together in a kind of Dance. It would be tedious to deſcribe their Habits and Perſons, for which Reaſon I ſhall only inform my Reader that the firſt Couple were Tyranny and Anarchy, the ſecond were Bigotry and Atheiſm, the third the Genius of a Common-Wealth, and a young Man of about twenty two Years of Age, whoſe Name I could not learn. He had a Sword in his right Hand, which in the Dance he often brandiſhed at the Act of Settlement; and a Citizen, who ſtood by me, whiſper'd in my Ear, that he ſaw a Spunge in his left Hand. The Dance of ſo many jarring Natures put me in Mind of the Sun, Moon and Earth, in the *Rehearſal*, that danced together for no other end but to eclipſe one another.

The Reader will eaſily ſuppoſe, by what has been before ſaid, that the Lady on the Throne would have been almoſt frighted to Diſtraction, had ſhe ſeen but any one of theſe Spectres; what then muſt have been her Condition when ſhe ſaw them all in a Body? She fainted and dyed away at the Sight.

Et neq; jam color eſt miſto candore rubori;
Nec Vigor, & Vires, & quæ modo viſa placebant;
Nec Corpus remanet —— Ov. Met. Lib. 3.

There was as great a Change in the Hill of Mony Bags, and the Heaps of Mony, the former ſhrinking, and falling into ſo many empty Bags, that I now found not above a tenth Part of them had been filled with Mony. The reſt that took up the ſame Space, and made the ſame Figure as the Bags that were really filled with Mony, had been blown up with Air, and called into my Memory the Bags full of Wind, which *Homer* tells us his Hero receiv'd as a Preſent from *Æolus*. The great Heaps of Gold, on either ſide the Throne, now appeared to be only Heaps of Paper, or little Piles of notched Sticks, bound up together in Bundles, like Bath-Faggots.

Whilſt I was lamenting this ſudden Deſolation that had been made before me, the whole Scene vaniſhed: In the Room of the frightful Spectres, there now entered a ſecond Dance of Apparitions very agreeably matched together, and made up of very amiable Phantoms. The firſt Pair was Liberty, with Monarchy at her right Hand: The ſecond was Moderation leading in Religion; and the third a Perſon whom I had never ſeen, with the Genius of *Great Britain*. At their firſt Entrance the Lady reviv'd, the Bags ſwell'd to their former Bulk, the Piles of Faggots and Heaps of Paper changed into Pyramids of Guineas: And for my own Part I was ſo tranſported with Joy, that I awaked, tho' I muſt confeſs I would fain have fallen aſleep again to have cloſed my Viſion, if I could have done it.

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